

# Guidelines for the Supervision of Children

## What does the CYFSA say about leaving children unattended?

*Section 136(3): No person having charge of a child younger than 16 shall leave the child without making provision for the child's supervision and care that is reasonable in the circumstances*

### Recommended guidelines for leaving a child alone

#### Infant - 9 years

- ◆ Never leave a child this age unsupervised at any time of the day or night.
- ◆ A competent caregiver should be on the same premises as the child.

#### 10-12 years

- ◆ Short periods may be acceptable for this age range (1-2 hours)
- ◆ There is a plan with the child and an adult in a neighbouring residence who has agreed to be available to the child if needed.

#### 13-14 years

- ◆ Longer periods may be acceptable for this age range (2-5 hours)
- ◆ There is a plan with the child and an adult is available by telephone in case of an emergency or the child needs assistance.

#### 15-16 years

- ◆ At this age, the youth should be able to be left alone for a full day. An adult should be available by telephone in case of an emergency or the child needs assistance.

**These are guidelines only. Every child and situation is different, and should be assessed individually.**

It is your job to teach your child the right rules for any emergency situation and what to do when you are not present. Talk to your child about who they can call, what to do if they are scared, and what to do if someone calls or comes to the door. Write this information down, keep it handy for the children when alone.

Do not allow your child to stay home alone if you are uncomfortable about it or if you think he/she is not ready.

**YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR CHILD'S CARE AND SAFETY AT ALL TIMES.**

### In deciding whether or not to leave your child alone, consider the following:

- ◆ The age of the child.
- ◆ The behaviour of the child, his/her temperament and health.
- ◆ How long is the child going to be left alone?
- ◆ Does the child know where you will be and how to reach you?
- ◆ Who is the emergency contact person for the child and how can they be reached?
- ◆ Does the child know the rules they are to follow when you are not there?
- ◆ Does the child know how to react in case of a fire, power outage and other emergencies?

**Keep a checklist near the phone for your children and the babysitter. Include all emergency numbers, where you can be reached, where other adults can be reached, etc.**

